

Applying Culture Concepts:

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Name: _____

Read the following passage from “Cultural Anthropology”, by William Haviland:

Salt Lake City-Police called it a cross-cultural misunderstanding. When the man showed up to buy the Shetland pony that was for sale, the owner asked what he intended to do with the animal.

“For my son’s birthday,” he replied, and the deal was closed.

The buyer thereupon clubbed the pony to death with a two-by-four, dumped the carcass in his pickup truck, and drove away. The horrified seller called the police, who tracked down the buyer. At his house they found a birthday party in progress. The pony was trussed and roasting in a luau pit.

“We don’t ride horses, we eat them”, explained the buyer, a recent immigrant from Tonga.



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1. How can the Tongan’s behavior be explained as “normal” according to the concept of *cultural relativism*?
 2. How can the seller’s horror be explained in terms of *ethnocentrism*?
 3. Think about the concept of *cultural relativism*. How can this concept be both **functional and dysfunctional in society**?

1. **Functional :**

2. **Dysfunctional:**